

#### IV. B. 15. National Recreation Trails

- a) Background. The National Trails System Act was passed in 1968 to provide Federal assistance to the Appalachian Trail and to establish a national system of especially important trails. The Appalachian and Pacific Crest trails were named in the act as the first two National Scenic Trails. Today the National Trails System consists of congressionally designated National Scenic Trails, which are continuous protected scenic corridors for outdoor recreation, and National Historic Trails, which recognize prominent past routes of exploration, migration, and military action. The historic trails generally consist of remnant sites and trail segments, and thus are not necessarily continuous. Although both types are administered by Federal agencies, land ownership may be in public or private hands.

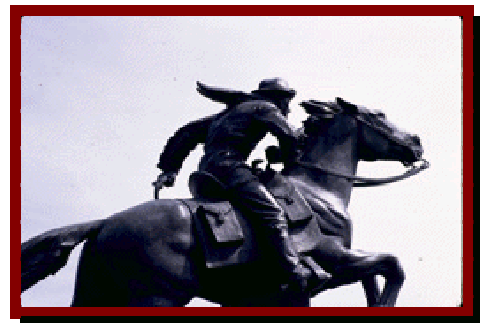
Twelve of the trails in the National Trails System are administered by the National Park Service, four by the Forest Service, and one by the Bureau of Land Management, for a total of seventeen National Scenic Trails and National Historic Trails. Portions of one National Scenic Trail and two National Historic Trails are located within Colorado.



Colorado portion of the  
Continental Divide  
National Scenic Trail System



Bent's Old Fort, located on the  
Sante Fe National Historic Trail



Statue of a Pony Express rider, located on the  
Pony Express National Historic Trail



Proposed Rural Development actions in or near such areas merit special evaluation because of their national prominence.

b) Governing Regulations.

- (1) National Park System General Authorities Act of 1970 (84 Stat. 825), as amended.
- (2) National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 (92 Stat. 3518, 16 U.S.C. 1a-5).
- (3) U.S. Executive Order 11514, Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality.
- (4) National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S.C. 4321.
- (5) Title 7, Part 1b and 1c, Code of Federal Regulations, U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Environmental Policy Act.
- (6) National Trails System Act of 1968 (82 Stat. 919), as amended.

c) Policy. Rural Development should not authorize, fund, or carry out any proposal or project which would adversely affect the unique values and benefits of designated or nominated National Recreation Trails. Whenever a proposed action is determined to have the potential for impacting a National Recreation Trail, the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and/or U.S. Forest Service should be consulted as early in the environmental impact analysis process as possible to evaluate the possible consequences of and protection requirements necessary concerning the action.

d) Classification.

- (1) Designated National Historic Trail.
- (2) Designated National Scenic Trail.



- e) Agency Jurisdiction. Portions of the National Trails System are administered primarily by the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service. Following are the expert federal agency contacts for each National Trail:

- (1) U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service: contact the Regional Office of the U.S. Forest Service with respect to the **Continental Divide National Scenic Trail**:

U.S. Forest Service  
Rocky Mountain Region  
Natural Resources Information  
P.O. Box 25127  
Lakewood, Colorado 80225

Contact: Steve Gregonis, (303) 275-5350

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/>

- (2) U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service: contact the Salt Lake City Branch of the Long Distance Trails Office with respect to the **Pony Express National Historic Trail**:

U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Long Distance Trails Office  
324 South State, Suite 250  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84145-0155

Contact: Jere Krakow, Superintendent, (801) 539-4094.

- (3) U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service: contact the Sante Fe Branch of the Long Distance Trails Office with respect to the **Sante Fe National Historic Trail**:

U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Long Distance Trails Office  
P.O. Box 728  
Sante Fe, New Mexico 87504-0728

Contact: (505) 988-6888



- f) Location of Resource. The National Trails System is composed of two components: National Historic Trails and National Scenic Trails. In many places, exact trail locations have not yet been determined. Individual trail clubs have detailed information on such trails systems. A portion of three designated trails are located in Colorado:

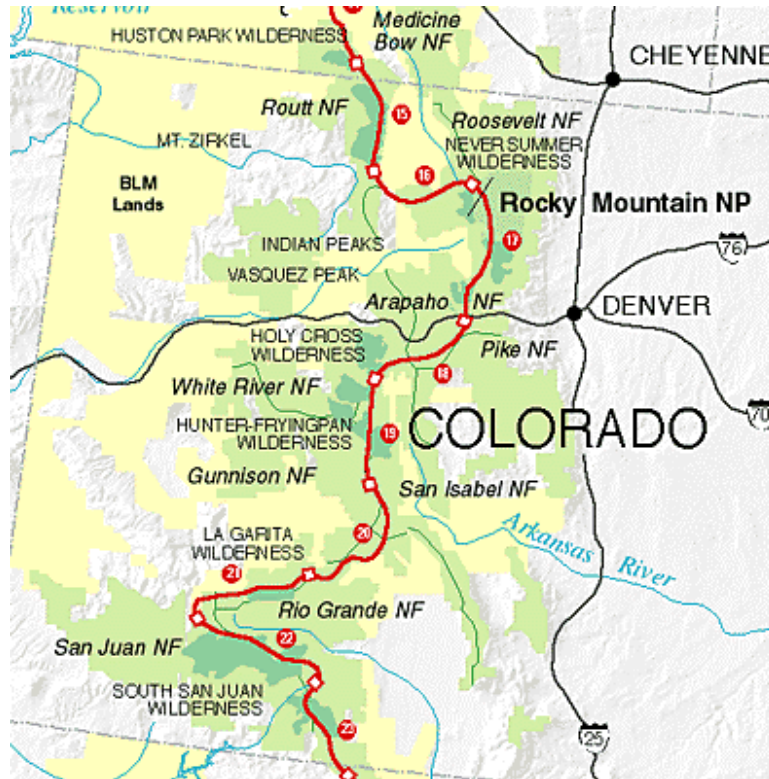
- (1) **Continental Divide National Scenic Trail:** Follows the Continental Divide from the Wyoming border to the New Mexico border. The Continental Divide Trail provides spectacular backcountry travel the length of the Rocky Mountains from Mexico to Canada. It is the most rugged of the long-distance trails. The only section officially designated runs for 795 miles from Canada through Montana and Idaho to Yellowstone National Park. It is open to hikers, pack and saddle animals, and in some places, off-road motorized vehicles. Some segments are open for use in other states.

Primary oversight agency: U.S. Forest Service  
Established 1978  
3,200 miles (5,150 km)

Additional contacts: Continental Divide Trail Alliance  
P.O. Box 628  
Pine, Colorado 80470

303-838-3760

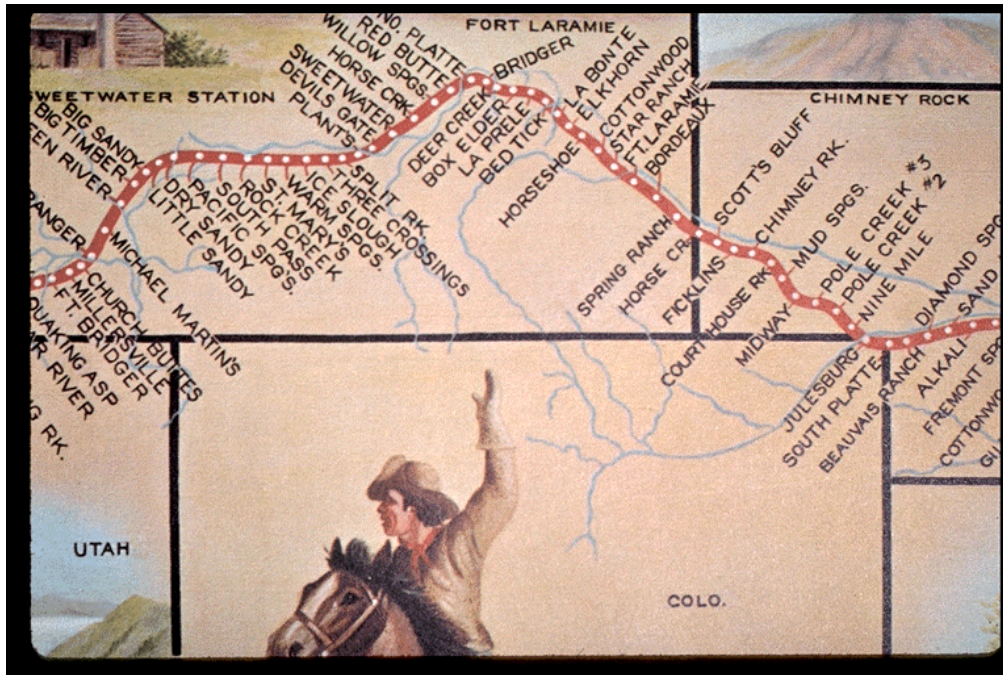
Continental Divide Trail Society  
3704 N. Charles Street  
Suite 601  
Balto, Maryland 21218-2300



Continental Divide  
National Scenic Trail  
(Colorado vicinity)

- (2) **Pony Express National Historic Trail:** Begun in 1860 as a vital mail route connecting the eastern United States to California, this privately financed operation only lasted 18 months before it was supplanted by the telegraph. Dozens of wiry riders and hundreds of horses conducted the relay of mail through desert and plain, mountains and storm, around the clock, to get the mail through. Average travel time from St. Joe, Missouri, to Sacramento, California, was 10 days. Nearly 35,000 pieces of mail were transported, some containing the momentous news of Lincoln's election and the outbreak of the Civil War. The transcontinental railroad followed much of its route in later years. Today many portions of the route are marked by highway signs. Reenactment rides, complete with souvenir mail, take place every year.

Primary oversight agency: National Park Service  
Established 1992  
1,855 miles

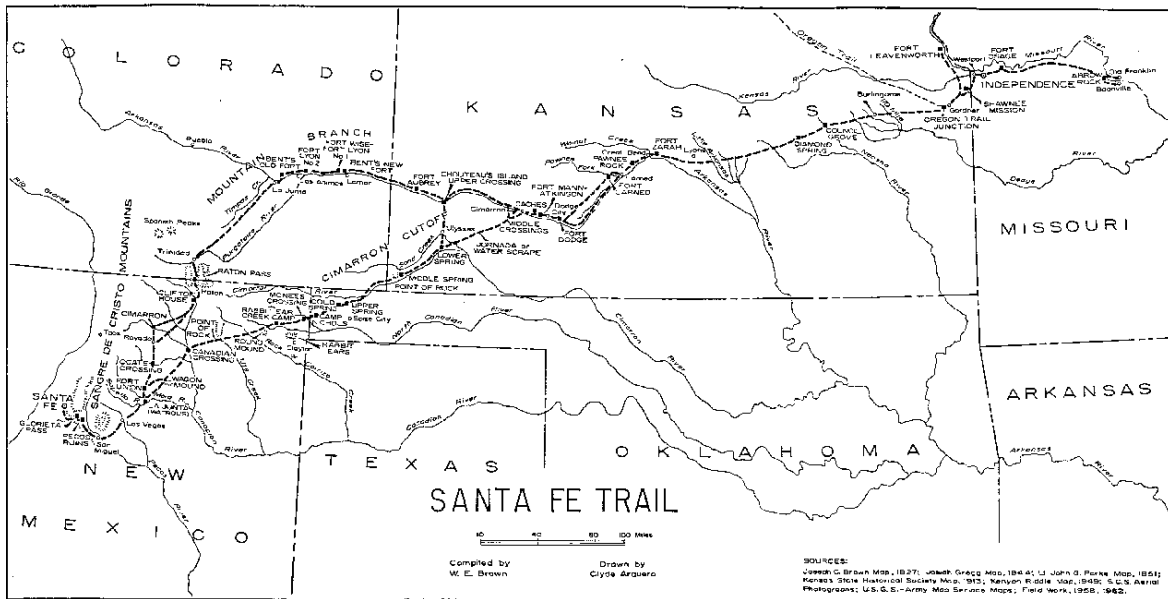


Pony Express  
National Historic Trail  
(Colorado vicinity)

- (3) **Sante Fe National Historic Trail:** After Mexican independence in 1821, U.S. and Mexican traders developed the Santa Fe Trail, using American Indian travel and trade routes. It quickly became a commercial and cultural link between the two countries. It also became a road of conquest during the Mexican and Civil wars. With the building of the railroad to Santa Fe in 1880, the trail was largely abandoned. Of the 1,203 miles of trail route between Old Franklin, Missouri, and Santa Fe, New Mexico, more than 200 miles of ruts and trace remain visible, some 30 miles of these are protected on federal lands.

Primary oversight agency: National Park Service  
Established 1987  
1,203 miles (1,937 km)

National Park Service, Southwest Region,  
Branch of Long Distance Trails  
P.O. Box 728  
Santa Fe, NM 87504-0728  
505-988-6888



Sante Fe National Historic Trail (Colorado vicinity)

g) Other References.

- (1) National Park Service. “*National Trails System Map and Guide*”

(Web-site)

[http://www.nps.gov/pub\\_aff/naltrail.htm](http://www.nps.gov/pub_aff/naltrail.htm)

- (2) Continental Divide Trail Alliance.

(Web-site)

<http://www.CDTrail.org/map.html>

- (3) Pony Express Home Station.

(Web-site)

<http://www.xphomestation.com/>

- (4) Sante Fe Trail Association.

(Web-site)

<http://www.nmhu.edu/research/sftrail/default.htm>